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# Near East/North Africa Report

(FOUO 12/82)



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## NEAR EAST/NORTH AFRICA REPORT

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AFGHANISTAN

KABUL SEEN FOLLOWING STALIN'S NATIONALITIES POLICY

London THE ECONOMIST in English No 7228, 13 Mar 82 p 50

[Text]

The Russians are using a subtle new tactic to try to control Afghanistan. They are encouraging local culture and traditions in different parts of the country in the hope that Afghans will turn away from thoughts of national identity, which is the mainspring of their resistance to Soviet occupation. This policy of divide-and-rule worked well for the Soviet Union itself in its early days. The Afghan ministry of tribes and nationalities is now becoming a replica of the Soviet department of nationalities founded in 1917, with Stalin at its head.

The Bolshevik government, under Lenin, believed that the Moslem areas of central Asia were a particular threat to a communist state ruled from Moscow. It set out to destroy the religious and racial bonds linking ethnic groups. Local personalities were used to play up local values. That is what is now happening in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's ministry of tribes has two departments. The nationalities department deals with settled ethnic groups such as the Uzbeks, Tadzhiks, Turkomans and Hazaras. Their mother tongues are being made official, their cultures are encouraged and much is made of their affinities with their cousins across in the Soviet Union. The aim, it seems, is to create units which can, where appropriate, be merged with their counterparts in Turkmenia and other Soviet areas.

The tribal department in the ministry deals primarily with the Pathans, who

constitute about half the population of Afghanistan and are the backbone of the resistance. The ministry is said to be planning the creation of a Pathan republic divided into sub-regions on tribal lines. Officials are out to undermine the Pathans' sense of common identity. Each tribe will have its own administration. Tribal chiefs will in effect be commissars and their children will be offered privileged education.

The ministry's tribal department is also thought to have the job of organising local militias to defend government-controlled villages against guerrilla attacks. Within the department is a group known as Akhwan which tries to stir up trouble on Afghanistan's border with Pakistan, in the hope of cutting the guerrillas' supply routes. Akhwan would like to see the border sealed and Pakistan put on the defensive by tribal unrest and the resurrection of Pakistani Pathans' demand for a homeland.

There is also a semi-regular force known to the government as the "loyal resistance". It includes many former agents and informers from the Afghan secret service, Khad, who have been forced out of guerrilla-controlled areas. During a recent Russian-Afghan operation in Parwan province, north of Kabul, their local knowledge led to the deaths of several hundred opponents of the government. The guerrillas are still trying to recover from that setback.

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IRAN

BRIEFS

ALLEGED DIVISIONS WITHIN TUDEH--Divergences within the Iranian communist party, the Tudeh, are becoming accentuated because of the increasingly bloody repression practiced by the Khomeyni regime. According to progressive diplomatic circles in Tehran, the possibility that the leadership of the party might explode under the vigorous pressure of grass-roots militants cannot be excluded. These militants reject the complicity of some of their leaders with the regime's most reactionary elements. Moreover, many former Tudeh leaders, who were excluded from the party in 1979, are now conducting a vigorous campaign in Europe against the present leadership, denouncing its activities favoring the repression of Iranian progressive elements. [Text] [Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 260, 1-14 Mar 82 p 31] [COPYRIGHT: 1982 Afrique-Asie]

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LEBANON

ARTICLE REVIEWS ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED BY NEXT ARAB SUMMIT

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 250, 27 Nov 81 pp 21-22

[Article: "Fez Documents: This Is How Lebanese Army Will Be Rebuilt; \$100 Million Required as First Installment to Implement Military Service"]

[Text] The 12th Arab summit has four major issues: The issue of South Lebanon, the Palestinian issue, inter-Arab relations and Arab-international relations. The preparatory meeting of the Arab ministers of foreign affairs which will conclude its proceedings with the publication of this edition has discussed four very confidential working papers prepared by the Arab League General Secretariat on the four issues. AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI correspondent in Fez has read the four papers, with their supplements, in full and has gathered the working papers and the Lebanese, Jordanian, Palestinian, Iraqi, Syrian, Sudanese and Libyan proposals to present them in this exclusive report.

We begin with the first paper on South Lebanon. The very confidential report prepared for the rulers and presidents says that the Israeli enemy is occupying the border strip area with some of its military forces, that it prevents the UN emergency forces from carrying out their tasks and reaching the international borders and that it shells the southern villages, coastline and Palestinian resistance locations scattered there with its field and naval artillery under the pretext of fedayeen operations at times and the pretext of attacks with Katyusha rockets against its settlements at other times. The enemy is also engaged in constant air reconnaissance operations and in air raids against civilian and military targets--raids that have reached as far as Beirut, the capital. The enemy has also been carrying out small-scale commando operations against specific military targets, beginning in the South and extending to the heartland of Lebanon.

The forces safeguarding the peace and obstructing an Israeli sweep are the UN emergency forces and a group of the Lebanese Army working within the framework of these forces. These forces are currently facing the Israeli aggression against the border areas and Israel's obstruction of implementation of the UN resolutions concerning Lebanon. This is at a time when the Palestinian resistance forces are densely present in the South and when they carry out artillery and rocket attacks against Israel. These forces, and South Lebanon along with them, are exposed to the Israeli retaliatory operations.

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At present, a real cease-fire is prevailing between Israel on the one side and the PLO on the other. The collapse of this cease-fire may lead to exposing the South to several possibilities that may re-kindle the war of attrition which erupted in the middle of 1981 and which may develop into a storming operation that could expose the South to occupation.

The position of the forces facing the Israeli aggression against South Lebanon can be considered a position of non-defense because it is not a stable position and because it lacks discipline and control. The presence of armed forces with an unstable defensive structure, lacking controls and operating in the absence of a Lebanese army capable of shouldering the burdens of defense against Israel constitutes a situation that fails to secure a constant defense of the South and a situation which will inevitably lead to the outbreak of a war as a result of which South Lebanon will be lost. A stable defense in the South requires bolstering the defensive capability of the Lebanese army against the Israeli aggression in its capacity as a regular force. It also requires enabling this army to shoulder the burden of defense and of filling the existing vacuum resulting from the absence of an effective legitimate and regular military presence capable of obstructing the outbreak of any surprise war whose timing is controlled by the enemy.

Plan to Rebuild Lebanese Army

The study report deals with the present condition of the Lebanese army with precise details, beginning with the land forces, then with the air forces and then with the naval forces. The report reviews the conditions of the inhabitants in the operations area and the South's defense needs. It is evident from reading these details that the plan to rebuild the Lebanese army calls for the formation of seven mechanized infantry brigades, along with their general support units. The nucleus for these brigades has been formed. Some of the equipment of this nucleus is modern and some is old and needs to be completed [renewed]. The general completion percentage is 50 percent for light equipment and 30 percent for heavy equipment. The training level and the morale are good and can be made excellent if Arab support and confidence are achieved.

As for the air forces, they include two squadrons of interceptor Mirage and Hawker Hunter aircraft. The Mirage squadron needs to undergo maintenance.

These squadrons also need to be reinforced with new aircraft. The naval forces also need to be reinforced to enable them to carry out their reconnaissance and interception operations so as to insure a minimum degree of observation and control of the Lebanese coastline within the framework of a complete coastal defense system. As for the air defenses, they must be rebuilt through conventional means and a combat brigade within the antiaircraft division must be bolstered immediately until a missile network is built within the framework of a complete air defense system intended to safeguard Lebanon and its field formations.

The report also recommends that the steadfastness of the inhabitants of the border areas of South Lebanon be bolstered by training these inhabitants in



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developmental, human and military terms to carry arms in the face of the Israeli aggression within the framework of a legitimate organization controlled by the Lebanese authorities concerned and compatible with the complete defense plan.

Generally, the report says that the South needs to have border control and to insure reconnaissance and infiltration-prevention operations with a force consisting of a reinforced brigade stationed south of al-Litani-Rashayya line and a reinforced brigade stationed north of al-Litani-Rashayya line to confront any possible land aggression against the south. There is also the need to insure the engineering requirements of the operations area with a force consisting of one field engineering battalion and to reinforce the frontline air defense units with an air defense regiment for every brigade. There is further the need to reinforce the coastal defenses with a number of coastal guard boats, to reinforce anti-armor defense in the face of the enemy's superior armors and to insure air defense for the vital utilities in the interior, along with the need for the capability to replace three brigades by three similar brigades and to re-station the army forces in Tyre, al-Nabatiyah, Hasbayya and Marj'uyun.

Regarding the PLO, the report proposes coordination within the framework of the concluded agreements, the Security Council resolutions and the Tunis summit resolutions, within the framework of the Lebanese sovereignty and through the Joint Arab Command which will determine the method of coordination and the method of action in the common Arab confrontation against the Israeli enemy.

As for the other Arab countries, the military situation in South Lebanon may make it necessary to request field support according to the development of the battle.

Thus, in an immediate initial phase, it is necessary to complete equipping the three mechanized brigades and to provide some of the support they require, either in the form of in-kind aid or financial aid or in both forms. In-kind aid is preferred in order to reduce the time required for equipping the brigades and to save the long periods of time needed for the delivery of arms. It is also required to strengthen the steadfastness of the southerners and to conscript at least 6,000 southerners and then to complete the parallel plans to reinforce the other forces. This is in addition to contributing to the aid needed to implement the military service law that is scheduled to be applied in order to complete the personnel and to absorb the conscripts, beginning with the South.

The report is coupled with detailed statistical charts demonstrating the needs for the various kinds of equipment and weapons and munitions (enough for at least 5 days of combat). The financial aid required to build the three infantry brigades is estimated at \$900 million and the aid to implement the military service law at \$100 million as a first installment and then at \$60 million annually. The aid required to train the southerners is estimated at \$50 million as a first installment and then at \$25 million annually.

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The report recommends that in-kind weapon aid be advanced within a period not exceeding 1 February 1982 and that the equipment for the basic training be supplied within a period not exceeding 1 April 1982. The report also requests that financial aid for other defensive purposes and for the purchase of munitions be supplied by 1 January 1982 as a maximum. The report concludes by urging the need to bolster the international operations area, to insure the deployment of the UN forces up to the borders and to insure stable security by deploying the Lebanese army in the Tyre, the port, al-Nabatiyah, Arnun, Hasbayya and Marj'uyun barracks before 15 December 1981.

A number of documents are attached to this report. The first concerns the damage sustained by both the Lebanese and Palestinian sides as a result of the Israeli attacks in July 1981, such as the destruction of bridges, buildings, vital economic installations and nearly 540 homes in Beirut and the South. The report then enumerates those killed and wounded, listing 336 Lebanese and 252 Palestinians killed and 938 and 503 Palestinians wounded in the period from 1 December 1981 to 1 July 1981, in addition to 50 other killed and wounded persons from various nationalities.

The second document recounts the events to which Lebanon has been exposed and the third document is a confidential Lebanese memorandum on "the confrontation to replace the peaceful efforts." The memorandum is based on the defense policy approved by the Lebanese Council of Ministers on 15 March 1980 in implementation of the army law. This policy calls for fighting the Israeli occupation, for coordination with the Arab states and for abidance by the joint Arab defense treaty, Security Council resolution No 425 (March 1978) and by the subsequent resolutions. This document points out clearly that Lebanon alone is shouldering the burdens of the Arab-Israeli war even though it is not a confrontation state and is not in a legal state of war with Israel. Lebanon is shouldering the burden because the real confrontation is confined to what is happening on its territories in the form of Israeli violations of the truce agreement and of the Security Council resolutions despite Lebanon's abidance by them and despite the Palestinian resistance's declaration of its readiness to abide by the agreement and the resolutions, especially by the latest actual cease-fire.

The memorandum also contains a reference to Lebanon's determination to regain its territories and to cooperate with the Arab countries and the PLO to safeguard its safety and unity. It also contains a reference to Lebanon's readiness to accept all military aid, both in-kind and financial, from any source whatsoever as long as it is not conditional and is compatible with Lebanon's needs and plans, keeping in mind that the Lebanese defense budget has allocated nearly 10 billion Lebanese pounds to equip the land forces in the immediate initial phase.

The fourth supplement attached to the document is the Lebanese draft resolution submitted to the Security Council in connection with the Israeli attacks and published on 20 July 1981.

The fifth supplement is Ambassador Philip Habib's statement on 24 July 1981 on suspension of the military operations. There are other supplements connected with the report of the UN secretary general on Security Council resolution

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No 490 (1981) and the Security Council resolution of 19 June 1981 which put its finger on the issue of South Lebanon. The supplements also include a copy of resolution 490 itself, a copy of the resolutions of the second session of the Joint Arab Defense Council which was convened at the Arab League in Cairo on 5 February 1975. These resolutions specify the kinds of weapons which each of Syria, Egypt, Libya and Saudi Arabia had pledged to supply to Lebanon and the sums of money which each of Kuwait (1.89 pounds sterling), Saudi Arabia (5 million), UAE (1.5 million) and Qatar (2 million) had pledged to give the Lebanese Government so that it may purchase the necessary weapons. This is in addition to another reference to an Egyptian pledge and an Iraqi pledge for financial and reconstruction aid.

Israeli Invasion

The report concludes by asking: What if the cease-fire in South Lebanon breaks down?

It answers: The official sources expect an Israeli invasion of the UN forces operations area. After striking the Palestinian resistance, evicting the southerners, occupying the South and forcing the UN forces to depart, another West Bank will emerge. The official sources also expect a penetration operation beginning with the gap existing in the UN forces zone and proceeding in the direction of Jizzin and al-Shuf with the aim of expanding the Israeli control area and of touching off an explosion in Lebanon and another penetration operation along the Marj'uyun-al-Biqa' axis in the direction of al-Biqa' to threaten Syria's safety from the west and to lure the Syrian forces operating in Lebanon into a direct confrontation which will lead not only to touching off an explosion in Lebanon but also to an all-out Arab-Israeli war. There is also the possibility of resumption of the war of attrition at varying degrees of intensity, along with commando operations of which the Lebanese capital itself will not be safe. This is a situation that blocks the path in the face of any just solution to the Palestinian issue within the framework of the United Nations. Moreover, this situation undermines the Arab stability on the one hand and, on the other hand, wipes out the possibilities of restoring peace to Lebanon, which is what the Arab League is trying to do through the Arab Followup Committee.

Lebanese Paper

What does Lebanon propose to face all this?

It proposes five basic measures which it has submitted to the conference in a written memorandum:

1. Urge the UN secretary general to form a UN liaison, coordination and documentation committee within the framework of Security Council resolution No 488 to take charge of reinforcing the cease-fire established in accordance with resolution No 490 in cooperation with the UN forces, the UN Observers Committee and the parties concerned in the South.

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2. Insist on the full implementation of resolution No 425, including complete Israeli withdrawal in accordance with the (1949) truce agreement, on restoring the Lebanese sovereignty and on establishing the state's authority.
3. Assist the Lebanese army, reinforce it with the aid it needs and enable it to gain the minimal reasonable degree of the capability to shoulder the burdens of defense in the face of Israel.
4. Exert all kinds of political and economic pressures to compel the governments concerned to implement the Security Council resolutions, to deter Israel and to compel it to proceed on the path of a comprehensive solution.
5. Establish a practical plan to begin reconstructing the South immediately with the Arab funds allocated on a defensive basis--a reconstruction in which the Lebanese army and the international organizations participate.

The Lebanese memorandum says that this plan gains its effectiveness from a general tendency toward peace coupled with readiness for war should a war erupt, provided that the timing of such a war is not in the hands of the enemy and provided that there is full preparation for it while the dialogue for peace remains open and continuous.

Therefore, a plan must be formulated to strengthen the Lebanese army and a careful military plan must be drawn up to provide immediate field support in case hostile Israeli operations are carried out, provided that the decision remain in the hands of Lebanon and that a timetable be set up to work within the framework of the UN and of bilateral and collective relations with the countries supporting Israel.

Lebanon also proposes assessing the possibilities of an aggression, the possibilities of movement, the means of pressure available, the possible joint measures and the military and economic capabilities. It also proposes assessing the objective conditions required to insure the independence of the Palestinian decision in harmony and coordination with Lebanon's sovereignty and with realizing peace in the South as a starting point for peace in the area.

After reviewing a number of Arab and international resolutions concerning Lebanon, the memorandum concludes with the working paper concerning the latest Lebanese call for a summit to deal with the issue of South Lebanon.

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MOROCCO

MOROCCAN-FRENCH RELATIONS EXAMINED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 259, 15-28 Feb 82 pp 8-9

[Editorial by Simon Malley: "Morocco-France: Hassan's Blackmail"]

[Text] "Officers, we know what you are thinking. We are aware of your disillusionment, your bitterness, your discouragement, your impatience. We also know that some look to desperate solutions in order to try to rectify the military situation in the Sahara and that others are even thinking of resorting to attempts at coups in the hope of changing the economic and social situation. I know all that and I know which ones of you are thinking along these lines. But I beg you to have patience a little longer! I promise you that you will soon learn news of considerable historic importance, news that will shake international public opinion and make our country the object of the admiration and respect of all nations in the world...."

It was substantially in these terms that King Hassan II addressed the higher officers of the Moroccan Armed Forces (FAR) three weeks before flying to Paris, where he was to meet with President Francois Mitterrand.

Actually, things are going very badly in the Moroccan kingdom. Not only is there deep malaise within the army following its successive defeats at the hands of the POLISARIO Front and as a result of its inability to crush the war of liberation waged by the Saharan people, but neither the massive military, economic and financial aid programmed by Washington nor the repression, torture and assassination of Moroccan patriots have succeeded in putting down a people in revolt.

President Ronald Reagan may well have assured the Moroccan sovereign that the United States will never let him fall, but can the king forget the fatal destiny of the Shah of Iran, despite the oft-repeated commitments of presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter? When the domestic situation suddenly grew worse in Tehran, was the American ambassador himself not personally instructed to insist that the Shah abdicate in order to protect his life and prevent his country from being carried away in a "radical" revolution?

The Weinbergers, Haigs, Carluccis, Wests, even the boss of the CIA, William Casey, will proclaim in vain that Washington will never allow the "Free World" to lose Morocco as it lost Iran. And yet, the backing and protection of an

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administration whose imperialist, racist, war-mongering policies arouse popular indignation are more of an obstacle than an asset to the Moroccan monarchic regime, which heads a starving population overwhelmed by unemployment, poverty, misery and the rapacious exploitation of the feudal lords and comprador bourgeoisie that have tasted of the delights of corruption which they enjoy as a result of their status as the subcontractors and agents of the multinational companies that are expanding throughout the country. The Moroccan people, acquainted with the horrors of colonialism and the absolutism of a decadent monarchy -- having experienced them in person -- know that it is not under the umbrella of American imperialism that they will find freedom, democracy and prosperity.

King Hassan II therefore needed a new "trick," another maneuver in order to gain time; deceive his people once more, divert their attention from the evils and suffering they endure.

Yesterday, it was -- directed against Algeria -- the holy alliance in which the parties of the "legal" opposition became involved in the hope -- both naive and stupid -- of "catching" the king in a war aimed at weakening him and at creating the conditions that would lead to his ouster. In their prisons, dungeons, holes and oblivion, those who had those thoughts are undoubtedly bitterly meditating upon the foreseeable failure of such calculations. They have even become virtual targets for killers at the right time, killers who have already been tested in the "clean liquidation" of opponents deemed to be beyond hope. One must hope that international opinion is sufficiently alert so that their lives may be safe. Likewise, one must hope that these "opponents," whose responsibility is equally great for the prolongation of a murderous war, will demonstrate the necessary political courage to recognize that the king, that imitator of Guy Mollet -- who thought that by overturning President Nasser he would eliminate the Algerian FLN -- is and will remain the main enemy of his own people, the incorrigible adversary of their rights and freedom.

The new "trick" was easily dreamed up by King Hassan II. Was he actually its author or was the idea given to him by certain American or other advisers? What difference could it make! The thing to remember is that the monarch thought that the only way to capture the imagination of Moroccan and international public opinion, now disabused and no longer believing in him or his regime, was to repeat the "gesture" of Anwar Sadat when, to the almost general consternation of the Arab world but to the acclamation of a West "astounded by the fine gesture," he landed in Jerusalem on 19 November 1977! Naturally, it was not to Jerusalem that the king of Morocco intended to go but to Algiers! Yes, to Algiers, with which he had broken off diplomatic relations and against which he had ceaselessly waged a destabilization campaign for nearly 20 years.

But in order for the Algerian Government to agree to receive him, in order that his offer not be rejected and that a summit meeting with President Chadli Bendjedid take place, he needed one or more intermediaries. He first of all tried Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed M'Zali, who, in an interview granted to LE MONDE, launched the idea of a Chadli-Hassan meeting. The test balloon was rapidly deflated by Algiers and the head of the Tunisian government backed down. The attention and efforts of royal diplomacy then concentrated on Paris.

"Imagine, if you will," the king and his emissaries hinted, "what a fine role President Mitterrand could play if he were the sponsor of such a reconciliation! I make no condition. I do not even ask that during my trip we discuss the Sahara question. All I want is for Algiers to accept me. We can leave it up to destiny to do the rest."

"Destiny" or rather, the unleashing of the psychological services of the Western powers allied with or friends of Morocco? "Destiny" or the pressures of press campaigns controlled, financed and inspired by the West and especially in the Third World? "Destiny" or the mobilization of all those who want to save the Moroccan throne and who will exploit the event in order to emphasize the "feat" and the "courage," the "temerity" and "shrewdness" of His Majesty? Just as they did on the day when Sadat landed in Jerusalem and pronounced his speech in the Knesseth.

The ploy was obvious, too obvious, so obvious, in fact, that only the naive could be taken in by it. As if those Moroccan sorcerer's apprentices and their instigators could for a single minute believe that those statesmen or better, the simple Algerian citizens, could be mistaken about the real meaning and underlying significance of the trap in which Hassan II and his allies wanted to force them to step.

Indeed, who would not understand -- in Algiers as well as among progressive opinion groups all over the world -- that by saying he was willing to go to Algiers, the king was pursuing a single objective: consolidating his prestige and dealing a blow to the POLISARIO Front by sowing trouble in relations between Algerians, Libyans and Saharans? Who could doubt for an instant that by trying to involve President Mitterrand in such a maneuver, he was killing two birds with one stone? If his "initiative" should pay off, he would isolate Algiers on the international scene and give the French chief of state a "historic" role. If it failed, he would turn to world opinion and say: "See the sacrifice I made? But you can do nothing with these Algerian hegemonists!"

Machiavellian? Some will say so, would say so, especially if the Moroccan sovereign had succeeded. But from his very first talks, he understood that President Mitterrand had no intention of lending himself to such a plan. One cannot learn precisely whether the king pulled the plug from the very time he submitted his plan personally and directly to the French president. The fact is, however, that the latter, forewarned and undoubtedly alerted by the leaders of the French Socialist Party (who do not hide their feelings of hostility for the tyrannical Moroccan regime), adopted a totally unambiguous attitude: keeping to strict neutrality in the Saharan conflict, while supporting the Saharan people's right to self-determination. Furthermore, he supposedly stated that he would only intervene if the parties directly involved would ask him to do so. It was clear that Francois Mitterrand had no intention of getting his fingers burned in an affair in which world opinion is on the side of the Saharan fighters in their national liberation struggle.

Hassan therefore failed, but he did not thereby have to lose the challenge to the higher officers in the FAR. He could not return empty-handed, especially

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given the imminence of the signing of the Algerian gas agreement that he had futilely tried to sabotage and that was going to make Algeria a privileged partner of France. He therefore had to give pledges to Francois Mitterrand in the hope that the latter would not undergo the preponderant influence of the Socialist Party, its leaders, cadres and members. A kind of blackmail thus began.

Superbly ignoring the official positions of the Arab League, Hassan II went against the current and supported the visit by the French chief of state to Israel, which he considers, unlike the 21 other members of the League, to be positive. Disdaining any preliminary consultation with those involved, he promised that he "would prevent" (sic) the Gulf states from withdrawing their funds from French banking institutions. Feigning to ignore his military agreements with Washington for the rehabilitation and utilization of Moroccan bases by the American Air Force and Navy, he lied to Mitterrand, insinuating that he would be willing to reject the political-military strategy drawn up by the Reagan administration in the Atlantic, the Arab world and Africa if.... Totally forgetting about his support for the Fahd Plan, he pledged not to call the Arab summit conference in Fes before Egypt's reintegration into the Arab League.

In exchange for what? For Francois Mitterrand's announcement that he would visit Morocco before the end of 1982. That he would agree to have lunch with him at his chateau at Betz in Oise. That France would remain open to future efforts to normalize relations between Rabat, Algiers and Nouakchott. That the Elysee would abstain from contradicting the statements or plots of Moroccan spokesmen on the results of his visit and the state of relations between the two countries in order to give "official" Moroccan propaganda free rein.

Consequently, when the king "defied anyone to find the slightest cloud" between him and President Mitterrand, when he asserted that Mitterrand was in perfect agreement with him about his analysis of the Saharan conflict and the way to resolve it, when his spokesman and cousin Ahmed Alaoui wrote in his daily that "in the eyes of Francois Mitterrand, Hassan II is a loyal ally who is loyal in his commitments, honorable in his conduct and respect for his word," it was not surprising that the Elysee should remain totally -- although uncomfortably -- discreet.

On the other hand, one can well imagine the comments of thousands of Moroccans -- if they were free to make them -- who have suffered and continue suffer the crimes of the tyrant in Rabat, what the parents and families of the thousands of torture victims, those who gave their lives to defend their rights as free and dignified men and women, think of that "loyalty," that "sense of honor," that "respect for his word."

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SYRIA

REGIME'S WAR ON MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD EXPECTED TO BE RENEWED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 251, 4-10 Dec 81 p 23

[Article: "Black Sunday in al-Azbakiyah; Lebanese Hours in Heart of Damascus; Is Regime Preparing for New Round of Oppression Against Brotherhood"]

[Text] Beirut--Damascus, which has gone to Lebanon to prevent the Lebanese war from coming to it, experienced last Sunday a storm of flames and fire in the Lebanese style. As usual, the Muslim Brotherhood is accused. But the dimension of the new events carries further political indications that the flaw in the ruling political establishment is intensifying and that troubles are accumulating in the face of the regime with all its structures, as well as other indications.

This time, the outcome has been weightier than the outcome of the familiar incidents which are summed up in clashes between Syrian patrols and groups of opponents. It is true that the Syrian authorities have committed terrible atrocities inside and outside the cities and the prisons, or the cities which they have turned into something similar to prisons, to stifle the opposition voices. But "Black Sunday" has left official and popular circles fearful that internal turmoil will be renewed on a large scale in the coming phase.

One hundred killed, more than 150 wounded, three buildings turned into debris and a 3-meter hole on a main street--these are the outcome of the mined car which exploded in al-Azbakiyah quarter in front of the military police headquarters. As usual in such incidents, many popular stories are mixed with the official reports. But the first threads of the incident itself can be sorted as follows:

At 1130 on Sunday, an ordinary tourist car was proceeding at high speed through the crowded Baghdad Street in the center of Damascus which separates the city's old quarters from its new quarters. The car tries to stop in front of the military police command. As usual in such cases, the guard on duty proceeded toward the driver and asked him in no uncertain terms to move elsewhere. The driver did not obey the order and got into an argument with the guard, intentionally seeking a clash with him. Bullets were then heard and it is said that they were aimed at the driver.

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At the same moment, the car exploded unexpectedly through, it is assumed, the use of an electronic control located at a close distance. When smoke started to rise from the nearby buildings and from the police building itself, the security forces surrounded the quarter. Firefighters and ambulances were allowed to pass. But because the ambulances were not enough, the army was forced to send helicopters. The operation to evacuate the casualties lasted more than 3 hours.

Liberation of Lebanon?

In Beirut, an organization calling itself the Organization to Liberate Lebanon From Aliens (most probably an intelligence branch) hastened to claim responsibility for the incident. This organization had previously claimed responsibility for similar incidents in the Syrian deterrence zones and in some Palestinian zones. But the Syrian media, which have shown the incident with all its ugliness, have hastened to accuse the Muslim Brotherhood. This accusation has been interpreted to mean two things: First, to undermine the size of the internal national opposition by depicting it as no more than religious opposition and, second, to prepare the ground for a new round of oppression against the Brotherhood itself by preparing the domestic and foreign public opinion for such a campaign.

Because it hasn't yet been proven whether the Organization to Liberate Lebanon From Aliens exists or not, the assumption that a certain Lebanese circle is the one which carried the latest operation in Damascus continues to be present.

War Against Brotherhood

The Syrian authorities had previously accused the Muslim Brotherhood of being responsible for the explosion aimed against the headquarters of the Soviet experts in Damascus last October. The Soviet TASS agency contributed to this accusation. The explosion in the Soviet headquarters was previously one of four announced explosions witnessed by Damascus in the past 4 months. The first of these explosions occurred at the government headquarters, the second at the headquarters of the air forces command and, the third at the military police headquarters. By reviewing the four incidents, it is noticed that they have been aimed against sites that are presumably the safest in the Syrian capital. This means that those who take part in or carry out these operations are not far from the ruling Syrian "house!"

The persistent question is: Will the war between Damascus and the Brotherhood be resumed?

The answer is most probably "yes." The years 1979 and 1980 witnessed a series of pursuits and successive operations between the Muslim Brotherhood and the special forces entrusted with protecting the Syrian regime and the ruling family. The oppression exercised by the authorities in Hamah, Aleppo and Homs at the end of last year and the first quarter of this year resulted in the death of at least 3,000 elements of the special guard and of the opposition. In June 1980, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad was exposed to an assassination attempt in which a hand grenade was thrown in his direction in the middle of

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a street. In the wake of the attempt, the president issued a law providing for the execution of any Syrian belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood organization. However, the law pardons those members who surrender to the authorities before 27 August 1980. Official Syrian sources say that 700 members of the Muslim Brotherhood surrendered before that date and that the war against this organization ended with the end of last year.

But "Black Sunday," regardless of whether created by the Brotherhood or by the regime itself with the purpose of pursuing the Brotherhood, means that the Syrian opposition is growing in a manner that threatens the ruling establishment from within and from outside and that the coming phase in Syria will not be a calm one.

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SYRIA

HAMAH INCIDENTS SAID TO PRESAGE REGIME'S DEMISE

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic N o 263, 26 Feb-4 Mar 82 pp 25-26

[Unattributed article: "Damascus at the Day of Reckoning. Syrian Regime Under Oxygen Tent"]

[Text] Is Hamah calm? The official Syrian comment issued by the Ministry of Information last Monday--the only comment on the bloody events in 20 days--said that everything had become quiet by the end of the week and that interrogations of the accused were continuing. Statements by the Syrian opposition confirm that complete sections of the city were destroyed before it became "calm." While Washington and the Western media remain mysteriously quiet, diplomatic reports which have arrived in Paris and other European capitals in the last few days indicate that the Syrian regime, which regained the upper hand by force, is only left with options of force on a huge scale in the near term on both the domestic and foreign levels if it seriously wants to avoid being overthrown in a civil war.

A long period will pass before all the circumstances that caused events in Hamah to explode are revealed and before the number of victims who fell in [government] operations using heavy weapons is revealed. These operations were such as an Arab city has never known before, excepting some in the Lebanese war, under various conditions of relations between a regime and its people.

Yet a long time will not pass before repercussions of the Hamah massacre are felt on the entire Syrian domestic scene because any military dictatorship, regardless of how much it exaggerates in striking popular uprisings, is a candidate for decay from within, though it be a silent decay not expressed by the media due to official censorship of information.

In any case, there is a consensus among strategic political observers in all Arab and foreign capitals that the Syrian regime has lost, for the first time since its inception, its impregnability which up until now has formed its protective umbrella. These observers also agree that the Syrian role in Lebanon and its temporary continuation have become prime candidates for basic reconsideration in light of the evaluation by officials themselves of the events of the last 2 months, events which are naturally linked to the size of the internal opposition, and not to interference by intelligence organizations

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from either side. The Syrian regime--and this is well-known--has depended since it was established on direct Soviet support and hidden American support. These two types of support are what has ensured, until now, conditions for [Syria's] survival, at the expense of thousands of victims from among the Syrians as well as the Palestinians and Lebanese. Since the battles of Hamah the regime itself has entered a stage of increased dependence. It now needs intravenous feeding and oxygen bottles more than it needs the help of intelligence agencies or oppressive weapons. For no intelligence agency, no matter how effective, can undermine any third world power which enjoys firm popular support.

Before the full "harvest of Hamah" is reaped on the domestic and foreign levels in Syria, there are five significant spontaneous conclusions which must be drawn:

- 1) The Arab and Islamic reaction to what transpired in Syria was not, in any capital, sympathetic with the Syrian Government. The Syrian leadership is isolated regionally and internationally due to a number of sociological, political and economic factors which, in the end, are sufficient to cause a domestic eruption.
- 2) The massacres which were perpetrated in Hamah and other Syrian cities removed the last fig leaf covering the Syrian regime's genitals and revealed the truth to various international and Islamic organizations concerned with human rights. The issue today is not a matter of searching for the "missing" in the darkness of Syrian jails, but rather one of searching for the "legality" of the Syrian regime itself and its right to survive under international law and accepted [human] rights agreements.
- 3) Syrian adherence to Soviet strategy and the maneuvering it practices within the context of this adherence vis-a-vis American is something which cannot continue. There are demands which have become clear, which cannot be delayed and which the Syrian regime must answer to since it has lost the majority of the "trump cards" which it had to play in the past.
- 4) The infection which spread to the Syrian deterrent forces in Lebanon and cause the clashes in Tripoli in northern Lebanon to erupt is another indication that the internal make-up of the Syrian army is not healthy. It is also an indication that this army, which the regime attempts to clothe in sectarian garb, is ripe for an uprising or perhaps a series of uprising before settling on a final formula based on national pan-Arab concepts of utilizing the military establishment for more than just to serve the narrow internal political goals of one family.

Four Thousand

Let us return to Hamah to say that Western sources estimate that the number of civilian victims of the clashes is 4,000 dead while the number of military dead is estimated at 400 from among those who were charged with quelling the popular uprising.

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The veracity of this number can be demonstrated by a recent statement issued by the "Islamic Revolutionary Command in Syria" and by stories carried by Arab and foreign newspapers about people who escaped from the encircled city.

The statement by the Islamic leadership said that the main axes of the fighting were: the northern part of 8 March street, both sides of which were totally destroyed; the Matiyir district; and the 'Alamin district. Military operations destroyed four mosques, felled the large clock tower building as well as the government residence building, destroyed houses along both sides of the 'Alamin district and a number of houses in the Bayadah quarter and the Mahatah quarters. Seventy tanks and pieces of equipment were destroyed, as were the 'Abaysi bridge and the mayor's home. All the defense company centers were shelled, and these include the Halb street center, the national hospital center and the municipal playing field center.

The statement also said that the mayor of Hamah's brother was one of the victims as well as Abu-'Umar Tallas, the nephew of Major General Mustafa Tallas, the Syrian minister of defense. He worked as a supervisor at the central telephone exchange. Also among the victims was 'Uthman 'Addi, chairman of the youth of the revolution. Those who escaped from the defense company centers were forced to take refuge in the al-Baytari medical college where they were pursued. The total extent of the killing and plundering has not yet been determined.

American and British newspaper reports say that Syrian tanks eliminated entire sections of the city and that tanks supported by artillery and forces numbering an estimated 12,000 along with party militia and intelligence agents turned the old section of the city into rubble. After 2 weeks of fighting the odor of dead bodies was permeating the city and government forces were opening fire on anything that moved.

Rescue Hamah

As with other Syrian cities the "infection of Hamah" spread last week to the Lebanese city of Tripoli. There were about 100 dead and injured in clashes between the deterrent forces and the public as well as internal clashes within the deterrent forces.

The "Higher Security Committee" was activated to strengthen the cease-fire, which had broken down three successive times, in cooperation with political parties in the city, the Palestinian resistance and the leadership of the deterrent force. Lebanese security reports indicated, however, that the city was still brimming with rumors and that graffiti and placards had been spread throughout the city calling for the "rescue of Hamah."

Other reports say that the events in Tripoli began as a result of division in the ranks of the deterrent force itself, one side wanting to go to Hamah to help the rebels there, and the other side trying to thwart this effort.

At the same time that clashes in Tripoli were intensifying and that certain northern districts of Syria were experiencing partial strikes, the Syrian

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opposition carried out an operation in the heart of Damascus. One of the rebels took a car carrying a large package of dynamite into the Ministry of Information building which is used for the shipment and distribution of the newspaper AL-BA'TH. It exploded, causing a great deal of damage to the building and leaving 76 dead and 135 wounded. The operation was intended to punish and warn the Syrian propaganda apparatus, which promotes the regime domestically and abroad and which covered up the clashes of Hamah and the massacre perpetrated there by the government.

Reactions

Reactions to the events in Syria have spread through the various world capitals, particularly the Islamic ones. The International Islamic Commission for Human Rights chaired by former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella has condemned the "collective annihilation carried out by the Syrian regime's special forces and defense companies."

A letter signed by the secretary general of the Islamic front in Syria, Muhammad Abu-al-Nasr al-Bayanuni and addressed to Ben Bella indicated that Syrian forces had blockaded the city for 3 weeks and had bombed it with planes, heavy artillery and missiles. The letter implored other human rights organizations to bear, along with the Islamic commission, "its responsibility in defending the persecuted people of Syria against their executioners and to form delegations to enter Hamah and look into the practices and acts of the regime against the defenseless public.

Acting for the commission, which he chairs the former Algerian president sent a long letter to the Syrian president affirming the commission's concern over what was taking place in Syria and condemning it for the undemocratic authoritarian and violent way in which the regime quelled the public's rights.

The letter said that it was not acceptable for Syria, which rests on a rich heritage of spiritual and humane civilizations, to carry out the likes of this terrible tragedy. The letter also called for the withdrawal of the regime's forces and the release of political prisoners including the former president Nur-al-Din al-Atasi, Major General Salah Jadid, Yusuf Za'in and tens of other previous leaders who have been arrested. The letter also called on the regime to restore respect to the basic human rights of humans and citizens in Syria.

Has Damascus entered the great day of reckoning? The weeks ahead will have the answer.

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TUNISIA

TUNISIAN SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS COULD BE MODEL FOR OTHERS

Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French No 1103, 24 Feb 82 p 28

[Commentary by Habib Boulares: "A 'Tunisian Model'?" ]

[Text] Nearly 13 years ago, Tunisia reversed its economic policy. In September 1969 suddenly abandoning the policy consisting of generalizing the establishment of cooperatives in trade and especially in agriculture, Tunisia embarked on a liberal course.

Mr Ahmed Ben Salah, responsible for the economy in the 1960's, paid dearly for it. Arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment in 1970, he escaped in 1973 and has been living in exile in Europe ever since. In the following years, the new prime minister, Mr Hedi Nouira, greatly advanced a liberalism that allowed bold businessmen and many parasites to prosper. The parvenus in the industrial sector and especially those in the service sector became the target of criticisms, and the real differences in incomes caused reactions among the working classes, which were exaggerated by the feeling of frustration of one group and the ostentatious behavior of the other.

What is happening in Tunisia is not unique, and many countries in the Third World have gone or are going through this delicate phase during which the passage from a state of need to that of relative well-being is accompanied by an exacerbation of social conflicts. These conflicts become serious when the state brings to bear the whole weight of its apparatus to silence the demands and at least gives the impression to be on the side of the wealthy against the frustrated even if, academically, it can justify its step because of the need to consolidate a national capital able to take up the challenge of underdevelopment.

The attack on Gafsa in January 1980, by a commando group coming from Libya via Algeria, was certainly an act of aggression conceived outside of Tunisia. This drama, however, was only possible, and the Tunisians did not doubt this for a moment, because of the political and social deterioration of the internal situation. Mr Mohamed Mzali who succeeded Mr Nouira did not fail to insist on the urgent need to reduce the differences between the classes and the regions of the country. After a relative quiet, marked by a gradual

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normalization of relations between the government and the unions, the social tensions, which reappeared 3 months ago, have become more and more unbearable. The feeling of frustration is aggravated by real differences between the different activity sectors and by the disappointment caused by the setback suffered by the political democratization process during the elections of 1 November 1981. From this to saying that the actual strikes also take on a political dimension is a short step quickly taken by many Tunisians. It seems evident that social and political partners are embarking on a dead end course in Tunisia. Not to meet the legitimate social demands is to face the risk of letting tensions degenerate into clashes. To meet all demands makes sense only if both the policy of development and the administrative structures of the national economy are radically modified.

It also seems that the time has come to gather around the table not only to representatives of the production forces but also the representatives of the political trends to start a broad exchange of ideas on the theme that is the main point of all these fragmentary debates, namely: "The position of the worker in a developing society."

The answer that Tunisia could give to this crucial question would contribute to avert the troubles that threaten it by bringing about a minimum national consensus. The answer could also serve as an example, since these difficulties are common to numerous countries that are trying to balance the imperatives of egalitarianism and the requirements of the returns on investments. The answer is still within reach as long as the forces that face one another have organizations that can speak for them. It will be purposeless if the conflicts degenerate into confusion. This is not excluded and it would be a pity.

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TUNISIA

LEADER'S DETERIORATING HEALTH, SUCCESSION CONSIDERED

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic No 258, 22-28 Jan. 82 pp 24-25

/Article: "Bourguiba to Tunisia: 'You Are Amazed at My Illness--The Amazing Thing Is My Good Health'"

/Text/ The increasing burden of illness on Habib Bourguiba is provoking anxiety among Tunisians at a critical period which is marked by internal social tension and the difficult circumstances the Maghreb is going through as a consequence of the Sahara conflict and Libya's radical policies.

Once again, President Habib Bourguiba, 79, has become accustomed to illness. Today he is in the United States for medical analyses and examinations in numerous hospitals and sanatoriums in Philadelphia and Florida, in which a number of major American doctors are taking part.

Accompanying him on his trip are his wife, Mme Majda Wassila, and his foreign minister, Mr Beji Caid es-Sebsi, who will be holding important conversations with American officials bearing on the general situation in the Middle East, developments in the Maghreb, bilateral relations between the two countries, and Tunisia's role in the area in the foreseeable future, in the light of probable domestic Tunisian developments.

The presidential declaration issued Monday 11 January acknowledged the president's delicate physical condition and stated that it required the utmost rest and care. This acknowledgment is in keeping with the official tendency to inform the people of the state of the president's health, in order to forestall rumor and gossip.

Anxiety over President Bourguiba's health has afflicted senior officials since last November. On the few occasions when he has appeared or talked at public celebrations, he has seemed to be suffering from a difficulty in speaking. The latest official declaration pointed out that the president was suffering from a swollen inflammation in the gums and jaw, accompanied by pain in the right hand.

The facts, which are no secret to the Tunisians, are that President Bourguiba has a long history of struggling with illness, owing to his suffering during the period of the fight for independence, the exhaustion resulting from his grave responsibilities in the 26 years that have elapsed since Tunisia's independence, and his

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advanced age. With him, the words of our Arab poet, "You are amazed at my illness-- the amazing thing is my good health" holds true.

In spite of that, very few people indeed know specifically what President Bourguiba's illness is. The most likely thing, though, is that he has been suffering since 1967 from heart problems in the form of a gradual hardening of the arteries and a disturbance in the circulatory system. In 1975 he started suffering from a nervous ailment which he himself has spoken about at times, saying that it sometimes keeps him from sleeping for days at a time.

President Bourguiba's health problems have made him an almost permanent customer of famous European spas, especially in France and Switzerland. In addition, he has regularly been visited at his official residence in the Carthage Palace by a number of famous European and American doctors. During his latest visit to the United States, he stopped in Paris for 48 hours, where he held quick medical consultations with his French doctors.

It is no secret, either, that health problems have prompted President Bourguiba to follow a careful program in his diet activity and treatment, and to be extremely sparing in the time he allots to pursuit of his official responsibilities. However, at the same time, he has amazed all observers with his exceptional ability to hold himself together and surmount these troubles. Today, after King Husayn, among Arab rulers, he has seniority in tenure, while illness has caused presidents younger than him, such as his Algerian neighbor the late president Houari Boumediene, to pass away.

The increased burden of illness on President Bourguiba and his prolonged absence from the country come at a stage which is of utmost importance for this small Arab country. Although the president's intervention in the details of everyday political and official life has diminished, he still dominates the general course of Tunisian politics through the force of his personality, his historic stature, and his broad powers in a manner that no one disputes. Consequently, his decisions, which are not subject to preview or change by any body besides him, always leave a strong mark on the course of events, domestic affairs and Tunisia's Arab and international relations.

The reason for Tunisia's anxiety is that the president's temporary or permanent absence will leave a large political vacuum, and vacuum with the people, especially since Bourguiba has no known successor. In recent years he himself has prevented the emergence of power centers in the government and party and has withheld his blessings and endorsement of the succession of any of his senior aides and party leaders.

Perhaps President Bourguiba, as a farsighted statesman, through past experience with people and his assistants, in failing to designate a particular person to succeed him, has the aim of having power invested and delivered in a quiet manner through legitimate and constitutional channels, after a long life, and then of leaving it up to the people to choose the right person.

Adding to the Tunisians' anxiety for the future is the fact that the domestic situation is characterized by some of the negative manifestations of features of

development in the third world. There is social and political tension arising from the fact that all things change with time while the ruling institution continues to stand on the firm foundations on which it was established close to a quarter century ago: political and religious currents and trends have risen to prominence that are totally at variance with the philosophy of the Destourian Socialist Party, in its domestic policy and applications of it or in their view of Tunisia's role on the Arab and international stage.

The majority of young people stand in bewilderment in the maze of such contradictions, and the ruling party, in spite of its attempts to liberalize itself, has not, by the admission of officials, accommodated all the young people's powers and activities. Meanwhile other opposition currents and trends are in a state of great division and fragmentation, depriving them of the ability to absorb and accommodate the new generations.

From the economic standpoint, while the liberalization policy followed in the seventies led to the flowering of the bourgeois class, a quarter of the population still lives below the internationally-recognized poverty level. There is 14 percent unemployment in the labor force, and 30 percent of the unemployed are young people under 30. Inflation is rising, especially with respect to basic commodities; the country's phosphate, oil and olive oil resources are not enough to cope with import requirements, and the balance of payments deficit comes to about \$1 billion a year.

The decade of the seventies opened Tunisia up to foreign investment, which was indeed successful in establishing industries and providing job opportunities; however, France, in particular, closed the doors once again in the mid-seventies to imports from Tunisia, and the crisis of recession returned.

There is an urgent need for rapid economic reforms, and the current cabinet of Mr Mohamed Mazali is aware of this. Three quarters of taxes are indirect and devolve upon the working classes. Foreign investment must be directed toward agriculture, housing and the fight against inflation and unemployment instead of being confined to tourist services or easy projects with a guaranteed rapid payout in the investors who benefit.

The circumstances the whole Maghreb is going through are also a source for anxiety. Tunisia has always been a factor for peaceful coexistence among socially and politically different regimes which has imparted a practical coloring to the slogan of Maghreb unity. Here is where Tunisia's awareness of the dangers of the struggle in the Sahara and President al-Qadhafi's adventures in the area comes in.

The attainment of a sort of reconciliation between Morocco and Algeria has been one of the perennial objectives of Tunisian policy. It appears that Mr Mzali recently participated in quiet diplomatic efforts aimed at the attainment of reconciliation between the two fraternal countries and that he has not ceased offering Libya an olive branch, in spite of its position, which is not understood here, and recently resulted in depriving Tunisia of membership in the Arab organization OAPEC. The Tunisians aspire to a rapid solution to the problem of the determination of the continental offshore shelf in territorial waters so that they can exploit oil and gas resources.

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While Tunisia's Arab role has been steadily growing, because of its accommodation of the League of Arab States and its solid relations with conservative countries, its relations with the West are marred by arguments on economic questions, especially with France. There is a feeling that Tunisia is in greater need of assistance to alleviate its economic crisis and dispel the causes of social tension than of a flow of modern weapons, on the premise that Tunisia's stability is connected more to its economic progress than to the development of its defence and security systems.

On this point specifically there is consensus among political leaders that developments of the armed forces in the event of President Bourguiba's departure will pave the way for probable interference by the army in politics and that Tunisia will succumb to the vicious circle of the military that has impaired the future of a large number of third world countries.

The Tunisian constitution itself is not totally clear on determining how the president is to be chosen. It stipulates that in the event of resignation, total disability or death the prime minister will assume the position until the electoral term of the National Assembly ends, when a new president will be elected.

On the basis of this constitutional provision, Mr Mohamed Mzali is in line to assume the tasks of the presidency, in view of his position as prime minister. Proceeding from that, Tunisians are monitoring Mzali's domestic and foreign policies closely and are studying the features of his personality in order to become acquainted with the man who may someday become president of the country and make sure that he will guarantee them the relative stability they have known in Bourguiba's era.

Mzali's personality endears him to people and to members of the opposition. He is calm, modest, an experienced administrator and a well-educated graduate of the Philosophy Department of the French Sorbonne University. He made his way up in administration as a teacher, a youth and sports director, and a radio and television director, then moved about in various ministerial positions until he became prime minister in 1980.

Mzali is the loyal son of the ruling institution; he is the product of its thinking and attitudes and he believes in the distinctive particular Tunisian character, in its Islamic Arab context. Hence his support for Arabization, through his magazine AL-FIKR, which he has been issuing for more than a quarter century.

Mzali's failure to be zealous in expressing his party affiliations has made him acceptable to other political and social currents and he has friends in the religious current and the labor unions and among employers. His relations with Tunisian intellectuals in particular and with intellectual and cultural currents in the Arab world in general are also strong.

Mzali occupies a prominent position alongside his official one; he is the secretary general of the ruling Destourian Socialist Party. However, some observers say that some wings of the party personnel are opposed to the liberal policy of openness that he has followed and to his call for party and political pluralism to end the single-party monopoly.

However, Mzali consolidated his position in the party when he gambled on challenging the opposition in free general elections. He won the gamble when all the opposition parties failed in November to obtain a single seat in parliament and the Destourian Party won 94.6 percent of the votes.

However, while the election victory supported his position in the party, it had little effect on the opposition currents' view of his call for liberalization, which made them doubt the seriousness of the party's liberal policy.

In spite of all that, Mzali still is a factor for peace, concord and stability both within the party, since his cabinet includes representatives of various tendencies, and within the main opposition currents, which consider him to be a positive factor for dialogue, which Mzali has always been anxious to stress. Since assuming his position, he has been set on introducing changes into the policy of his predecessor Hedi Nouira; he has limited the spread of the influence and power of businessmen, has allowed the emergence of new papers, has carried out legislative elections, and has entered into a national front with the General Tunisian Federation of Labor (workers' unions) in a national front which ran in the elections in the face of the other opposition currents.

In response to criticism, Mzali says, "Personally I wanted to see some opposition members win seats in parliament, but it was not in my power to help them." He then asserted, in a television interview, "Pluralism will continue and grow in Tunisia from now on and "the opposition that took part in the elections is recognized in fact, and I do not rule out the possibility that in days to come President Bourguiba may decide to recognize these organizations, which are permitted now."

#### Other Names Presented

The fact that Mzali's name is being circulated vigorously as a candidate to succeed President Bourguiba does not keep one from saying that other names have been raised; if they have not been raised as vigorously, surprises and new developments can generally play a role in matters of this sort.

In any event, there are prominent personalities in the heart of the ruling organization. Mr Munji El Kaali has stood out since his resignation from his ministerial position, when he demanded more flexibility in dealing with the General Tunisian Federation of Labor. He returned as director general of the party as a successor to Mr Mohamed Sayah, leader of the hard-line wing.

There is Beji Caid es-Sebsi, minister of foreign affairs, who returned to the party fold after a short period of cooperation with Mr Ahmed Mestiri, leader of the Movement of Democratic Socialists.

In addition, there are Driss Guiga, Tahar Belkhoja, Mohamed Sayah, Habib Bourguiba Jr and Taleb Baccouche, secretary general of the General Tunisian Federation of Labor.

Outside the ruling organization, there is Ahmed Mestiri, who played a major role in the party and in power toward the end of the sixties and the early seventies,

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then was definitively cast out in 1974 when he worked as a lawyer and issued the newspaper AL-MUSTAQBAL, which he turned into the organ of the Movement of Democratic Socialists.

Mestiri says that his movement in fighting for greater liberalism and independence in the labor union movement and for implantation of a system of party pluralism. He also calls for assertion of the Tunisian identity, like his former colleagues in the ruling party.

Among these people, there are others who might not become candidates for the presidency but could by virtue of their status and centrality play a great role in supporting and backing one candidate or another. Among them perhaps are Majda Wassila and Mr Habib Achour, chairman of the Tunisian General Federation of Labor.

Majda Wassila, because of the status she enjoys through her husband and her social and political interests, plays an influential role in Tunisian public life and events, although she has always stressed that she has no political ambitions and says that the only thing that concerns her is the future and stability of Tunisia and its young people and the role of Tunisian women. She has some reservations about the notion of party pluralism.

Mr Achour may perhaps have been a strong candidate for the presidency were it not for his age; he is over 70. Achour has linked his trade union struggle with that of his old friend Bourguiba, and his labor leadership went under the banner of the single party after independence in 1956.

However, that has not inhibited the emergence of disputes between him and the regime, which have caused him to draw close to and back away from the circles of decisionmaking. This dispute reached its peak during the General Labor Federation's protest against Hedi Nouira's policies in the seventies, then the bloody clash with the authorities in 1978, his appearance in person at trial, his sentencing to prison, then the reduction of the sentence and his release last year, when he was permitted to return to the presidency of the federation.

Thus Achour, by virtue of his labor leadership and the historic active role the labor movement enjoys in the country, could play the role of "kingmaker" when the time comes to choose.

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TUNISIA

PREMIER DISCUSSES FUTURE DIPLOMATIC STEPS

Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic in Arabic No 258, 22-28 Jan 82 pp 24, 25

/Article by Florence Ra'd: "Mohamed Mzali to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI: A Second Fez Before Next June"/

/Text/ The Tunisian prime minister, Mohamed Mzali, expects that the next Arab summit conference will be held in the city of Fez next May. He expressed this prediction to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI at a meeting it held with him in Paris. He also dealt with a number of new developments on the Arab and international stages.

In his latest visit to France, the Tunisian prime minister, Mohammed Mzali, held a series of meetings with senior French officials, most conspicuously his meeting with the French president, Francois Mitterrand, and the prime minister, Pierre Mauroy.

The importance given to Mr Mohamed Mzali's visit to France, which took no more than 24 hours, can be attributed to the role Tunisia is anticipated to play in France's relations with the Maghreb countries and in the context of the Middle East.

The visit is not the first contact between socialist France and the Tunisian government. Mzali previously met with President Mitterrand last 5 November and Premier Pierre Mauroy is also preparing to visit Tunisia next 4 November.

AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI has learned from circles on both sides that France's relations with the Maghreb countries and the Middle East crisis were the most important subjects discussed in the talks. Just before his trip to Paris, Mzali said "The Maghreb can play a big role in relations between France and the Arab world." He also refrained from all criticism of the French position on the Middle East, considering that French policy "ultimately has the goal of the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip."

We met with Premier Mzali and put a number of questions to him on the results of his discussions with the French party and the most recent developments on the Arab stage.

/Question/ European and Arab public opinion, having followed the experiment in pluralism, has drawn negative conclusions following the disclosure of the election results. What is your evaluation of this experiment?



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/Answer/ That is now an old issue.

/Question/ But we in AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI have criticized what took place, and we are interested in knowing your opinion on the subject.

/Answer/ The important thing about the elections that took place in Tunisia is the new state of affairs embodied first in the existence of a recognized opposition party, the Communist Party, and then in the presence of such active new organizations as the Unity of the People (temporary board), and the Democratic Socialists. Then, in the past, there was no question that opposition newspapers would be issued while today the number of opposition papers in French and Arabic exceeds the number of regime papers.

We respected the law on the democratic game in the course of the elections and made good on all the promises we made regarding the election campaign, in terms of giving people equal time to appear on television and talk on the radio. The citizens saw opposition candidates discuss their ideas, opinions and alternative policies. Not only that, but they criticized and condemned without censorship. I do not think this sort of thing exists in countries of the third world or the Arab countries.

I also believe that our organization (the National Front), which includes leaders from the Destourian Party, which is present everywhere and has its traditions, its public, and a history of 50 years of existence, alongside the Tunisian General Federation of Labor, the Federation of Employers, the Womens' Federation, and some independents, has reduced the chances of the other organizations.

What one must say is that we embarked on the electoral campaign with zeal and have made rapid achievements in a year and a half and in all fields. I can stress that in numerical terms no opponent obtained enough votes to entitle him to win.

/Question/ Does that mean that the assembly will remain as it was?

/Answer/ Personally I do not believe so. There are numerous political forces in the front. First, there are the labor forces, represented by 27 deputies; the secretary general of the Labor Federation declared before the elections that would constitute a bloc of voters. There is also a bloc of independents who have expressed their opinions most seriously and frankly in a discussion on the current general budget. Moreover, the door is not closed to recognition of the other organizations for the next 5 years.

My conviction is that politics is always characterized by dynamism. There is a possibility that these organizations will be recognized, and I believe that we have taken an advanced step along the road to liberalization and progress, combining socialism, which is the resistance of exploitation for the sake of respect for man, and democracy, which means addressing oneself to freedom and dignity without succumbing to the uneven process we see in some countries or slipping into the political fragmentation which is the prelude to foreign intervention and chaos.

#### Tunisia and France

/Question/ It has been observed that something akin to a revolution has occurred in relations between France and the Maghreb countries. The France of Giscard was closer to Morocco while the France of Mitterrand is drawing close to Algeria, Polisario and Libya at the expense of its relations with Morocco. Where does Tunisia stand in these relations?

/Answer/ First one must note that relations between France and Morocco have not gotten worse in President Mitterrand's term; the King of Morocco is going to visit Paris shortly. Franco-Algerian relations were not in decline in the previous period; although they were characterized by some stagnation, President Mitterrand's visit to Algeria eliminated much misunderstanding.

Tunisian-French relations are good and their foundations are being deepened in the cultural and economic contexts. We recently signed a cultural, scientific and technical cooperation protocol. The text of the protocol specifies the tasks which must be carried out in various cultural, technical and scientific fields. Attention is being concentrated on the issue of determining the technical fields to receive priority and programming within the sixth development plan. Agreement has also been reached on the subject of grants and exchanges of visits between university personnel and artists and preparation of joint programs. Agreement has also been reached on the subject of promoting the Arabic language and seeking to promote the foundations of Arab civilization. The preferred instrument for activities of this sort will be the Institute of the Arab World, which will soon open in Paris.

A Tunisian-French agreement for the establishment, use and maintenance of an under-sea cable communications system between Tunisia and France has also been signed. That is the third of its kind; it will be ready in 1983 and will contain 280 lines in addition to the 600 existing ones.

#### A Summit in May

/Question/ Have the recent inter-Arab contacts reached a point which can permit the setting of a fixed date for the second Fez summit? What is Tunisia's official position on these efforts?

/Answer/ I have already declared Tunisia's official position in this regard. This may be summarized as agreement on the unification of Arab ranks behind a united initiative which would be an alternative to Camp David. Prince Fahd presented his initiative at the first summit. However, this initiative will not become a practical plan until the Arab summit endorses it, even if that is done by editing and rounding out some aspects of the plan. At the Baghdad Summit, an agreement was made that we would not present individual country plans, but rather a nation-wide one, and I think that inter-Arab contacts have helped eliminate some obstacles in the way of this initiative by developing some of its sections to allow for an invitation to a second meeting in Fez in the month of May or June.

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/Question/ Day after day Beirut is turning more and more into a cemetery of diplomats, from the American ambassador Meloy (1975) to the French ambassador Delamare (1980), from the Iraqi embassy disaster to the assassination of the Algerian minister without portfolio. How do you view the war in Lebanon, in this stage specifically?

/Answer/ We are really sad over the use of these methods, especially the physical elimination of diplomats, who are considered messengers on their missions. In any event, these inhumane elimination acts are the result of the existence of a Palestinian cause which has not yet been resolved.

Camp David Is the Obstacle

/Question/ What is your conception of the stage following the withdrawal from Sinai as far as Arab-Egyptian relations go?

/Answer/ Former President Anwar al-Sadat affronted the dignity of individuals in the Arab world in the past, having transgressed against the dignity of the Arab nation by signing the Camp David treaty. President Husni Mubarak has at least not affronted these feelings and still retains his composure and balance. Egypt has chosen its own path and has alienated itself from the Arabs by continuing along the Camp David line and through its position regarding the Palestinian cause. While al-Sadat has bequeathed personal and political hostility between himself and the Arabs, no obstacle remains now that he has gone except the political aspects, which is the Camp David line. If Egypt retreats from these agreements it will find its place in the Arab ranks, although so far the matter seems out of the question.

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WESTERN SAHARA

RESOLUTIONS ON WESTERN SAHARA EXAMINED

Paris AFRIQUE-ASIE in French No 259, 15-28 Feb 82 p 10

[Article by Kamel Djaider: "Nairobi I, II, III"]

[Text] The OAU is once again confronted with the question of the Western Sahara. The 18th Summit Conference in Nairobi precisely defined the role and duties of its implementation committee. The highest African organization had entrusted it with the task of organizing and carrying out a free, general, regular referendum throughout the Western Sahara in order to enable the Saharan people to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination.

What then has happened since that summit conference? With the sense of theater for which he is known, Hassan II had nevertheless solemnly accepted the organization of the referendum. He even pledged, before his African peers, to see that the Saharan people would make their decision as soon as possible. And yet, as everyone knows, no measure, no move has yet been taken in the direction of negotiations with the POLISARIO Front by the king. On the contrary, Rabat has only intensified its efforts in the sense of continued war and internationalization of the conflict, accentuating even further the very grave threat weighing over Northwest Africa and the entire Maghrebian region.

The danger is now greater than it has ever been, due to the commitment of one of the superpowers -- in this case, the United States -- alongside Morocco. And it can only be warded off by a peaceful solution that will necessarily mean negotiations between the two parties to the conflict.

Washington Involvement

The OAU, which constantly calls for a ceasefire, must impose negotiations in order to be successful. It is very obvious that in order for there to be a ceasefire, there must be agreement between the two belligerents, which presumes that the latter will decide it together, through negotiations. Rabat and the POLISARIO Front must therefore sit down at the same table and discuss the practical terms of a halt in hostilities, necessary for the organization of any referendum. The POLISARIO Front does not view a ceasefire as an end in itself. The Saharan soldiers will not put down their arms until they have adequate guarantees, such as the withdrawal of Moroccan troops from the territory of the Western Sahara and their replacement by an interim international administration.

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Among the members of the implementation committee, there are some who believe that by giving too much weight to the idea of the ceasefire, it is totally possible to remove the means of reaching it. It is not any coincidence that Washington so ardently supports both the Moroccan occupation and the "concerns" of the implementation committee.

Political observers who closely follow the evolution of the situation in the region confirm the view of the Saharans, who state that a "pax americana" is being imposed on them.

In 3 months, Rabat successively received American Deputy Secretary of Defense Francis West, Ronald Reagan's security adviser, Gen Vernon Walters, the No 2 man in the CIA, Bobby Ray Imman, the very influential Senator Charles Percy, and finally, before Hassan II's trip to France, the secretaries of commerce and agriculture, Malcolm Baldridge and John Brock. This entry in force (oil research off the coast of Tarfaya, a study of the bituminous schists, the coming adoption by Parliament of an "adequate" investment code), mainly aimed at consolidating the throne, is expressed by an accelerated "South Americanization" of the country. Washington will very soon be able to decide the fate of Morocco 100 percent. Alexander Haig's visit to Rabat on 11 February is undoubtedly significant of the American determination to get a solid foothold in Northwest Africa.

In the hierarchy of the new concerns of the White House in Africa, Morocco occupies the privileged place of the future regional policeman and support base for the Near East. Furthermore, the country arouses even greater interest since the changes in France on 10 May. On this subject, the trip that Hassan II made to France last month revealed the extent of Moroccan concerns over the commitments made by the French Socialist Party during the election campaign of candidate Mitterrand and in the face of the prospect of the political act which the opening of an office of the POLISARIO Front in Paris represents. The king of Morocco tried during his stay to advance only those points of agreement existing between him and the president of the French Republic. Consequently, with enthusiasm contrasting with the reserve observed by all other Arab chiefs of state, he approved the visit which Francois Mitterrand plans to make to Israel and confirmed the coming official visit by the French chief of state to Morocco.

**Responsibility of OAU**

As for the Moroccan-Saharan conflict, he mentioned it only in order -- once more -- to refuse to recognize the evidence: His adversary is the POLISARIO and not Algeria. By shutting himself up in this attitude, Hassan II "links peace to his fate," as Fadel Ismail, the POLISARIO's representative in France, emphasized. It is nevertheless certain that this "Nairobi III" will have pointed up the responsibility of certain countries in the OAU, whose objective is to give Morocco the respite it needs to step up its economic and military potential through the United States.

Even better, in certain African diplomatic circles, it is not excluded that members of the implementation committee, "Trojan horses of Washington and Rabat," want to engage the committee in separate negotiations with the POLISARIO Front,

on the one hand, and Morocco, on the other. The operation would enable the implementation committee to take Rabat's place, which would have the effect of gaining time once again for Hassan II.

We can therefore understand the insistence with which the POLISARIO Front constantly underlines its refusal to see "any fragmentation or atomization of what must be an overall agreement." "The ceasefire is not only a technical measure," one high Saharan official recently told us. "It is an eminently political measure that requires political, military and diplomatic guarantees (....) Proceeding in any other fashion is to put the cart before the horse," he added.

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